

primitive libidinal wishes, and the phantasies of retribution to which they give rise, having been repressed, the great part of the conscious psychic field has then been occupied by the expanding ego, with its ordered relation to reality, and its cumulative experiences.

Owing to these two influences, one negative, one positive, our minds thus move so far away from the simple concrete images and experiences of early childhood that it becomes extremely difficult for us to recapture them. As my material shows, however, if we listen with open ears to the free conversation of quite little children, we are able to recognise signs of such phantasies ; and when we explore the phantasy life of adult or child by the psycho-analytic technique we do recover them in almost unqualified and unadulterated form.

The extent to which these primitive phantasies belonging to the earliest level of development continue to affect the structure of later mental development depends to a very considerable extent upon the actual experiences which the child undergoes. It is possible for a real situation to approximate so closely to a primitive phantasy as to confirm the child in his belief that the world really is like that. In such cases primitive anxieties are so enormously strengthened as to lead to quite serious mental disturbance.¹ Normally, however, these primitive phantasies are worked over and tested out

¹ One of the most striking examples of the way in which it is possible for experience to confirm phantasy is that occurring in the early life of a woman patient, who came for treatment on the ground of severe hysteria, but soon revealed a marked hypochondriacal condition, and what amounted to a psychotic inability to distinguish between real events in the external world and phantasied events in the inside of her own body. In the " hysterical " attacks, she had violent screaming fits which were her only way out of the most terrible state of internal tension connected with the feeling that she was only half

alive, that she was
" cold right in her soul", that she might " fly out of
herself at any
moment, " fly out from the inside of her body ", that she
had a fearful
hole in her middle", or an " awful blank in her brain ",
and so on. In
the course of the analysis, we touched on various points
of real experi-
ence which threw light upon one or other of these
symptoms. But
presently we came to an early and central real situation,
which had been
so vivid and corresponded so closely to primitive early
phantasies as to
stamp its phantastic structure upon the world of reality,
and arrest her
further mental development. She had attained a thin
coating of adap-
tation to the ordinary real world, but this only served to
cover the true
phantasy-reality which filled almost the whole field of
her inner mental
life. This central situation was as follows : After a
difficult early
childhood the child in her fourth year travelled with
her parents, an
older brother and sister, a governess and an eight
months' baby, to
the interior of a South American State. After the long
voyage on board